

Tailgating shown the red card as new law comes into force

20.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Entering a football match without a ticket will become a criminal offence this weekend, with offenders facing a banning order alongside up to £1,000 fine.

Football fans who try to enter grounds without a ticket will face lengthy banning orders and hefty fines under strict new laws that come into force this weekend.

The government and authorities have teamed up as part of the clampdown on 'tailgating' - where supporters force their way through stadium turnstiles by staying closely behind legitimate ticket holders.

Bespoke new laws will be in place from Sunday ahead of the Carabao Cup Final between Arsenal and Manchester City at Wembley. The national stadium was the scene of serious disorder at the Euro 2020 Final as thousands of ticketless hooligans smashed their way in using this tactic.

The new act makes it illegal to enter a football match without a ticket, stopping tailgating and forced entry to keep fans and matchday staff safe. It will also be illegal to knowingly attempt to gain entry using forged tickets, passes and accreditation documents, or by posing as a member of stadium or playing staff.

Until now, there were no specific legal penalties for entering a football match without a ticket - a gap this act firmly closes.

Offenders will be arrested and face a football banning order of up to 5 years - preventing repeat offenders for jeopardising public safety - and a fine of up to £1,000.

Tailgating and forced entry puts fans at risks, particularly at sold out or high-profile fixtures. They can cause overcrowding and injury, divert police resource away from other critical areas, and increase tension between legitimate ticket holders and ticketless fans.

Crime and Policing Minister, Sarah Jones, said:

Football fans should be able to enjoy the game without feeling unsafe or threatened. We're giving the police the tools they need to ensure the chaos we saw at Wembley 5 years ago never happens again.

Anyone who endangers others by forcing their way into stadiums faces serious consequences.

In response to the Euro 2020 final, the Football Association (FA) commissioned Baroness Louise Casey to undertake an independent review into the disorder at Euro 2020.

The review recommended strengthening the legal framework to deter football-related disorder, including tailgating and forced entry.

A government-sponsored Private Member's Bill was introduced by Linsey Farnsworth, Labour MP

for Amber Valley.

With England and Wales set to co-host Euro 2028, the Unauthorised Entry to Football Matches Act will tackle these risks now so that fans can enjoy world-class football safely.

Baroness Casey of Blackstock said:

Forcing your way into a football match without a ticket isn't harmless. It jeopardises the safety of legitimate fans and staff.

Making tailgating a criminal offence makes it clear that this behaviour is dangerous, won't be tolerated and those who do it will face consequences.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tailgating-shown-the-red-card-as-new-law-comes-into-force>